

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 USUN N 03302 250052Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 03302

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PDEV, UNGA, RQ

SUBJ: PUERTO RICO IN COMMITTEE OF 24--CHINESE POSITION

REF: (A) STATE 188247, (B) PEKING 2362

1. SUMMARY: AMB YOUNG CALLED ON CHINESE AMB CHEN AUG 24 TO DISCUSS QUESTION OF PUERTO RICO IN COMMITTEE OF 24 (C-24). CHEN TOOK POSITION THAT OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PUERTO RICANS WISH INDEPENDENCE AND THEIR EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION MUST LEAD TO INDEPENDENCE AND NOTHING SHORT OF THAT. HE AGREED CUBA AND USSR USE C-24 CONSIDERATION OF QUESTION TO EMBARRASS US BUT SAID PRC POSITION IS BASED ON PRINCIPLE. PUERTO RICANS SHOULD OBTAIN INDEPENDENCE NOW AND MATTER SHOULD NOT BE DEFERRED. END SUMMARY.

2. AMB YOUNG AND MISOFF DISCUSSED PUERTO RICO WITH PRC AMB CHEN AUG 24. ALSO PRESENT WERE PRC COUNSELLOR CHOU NAN, C-24 REP CHIN AND INTERPRETER. AMB YOUNG NOTED TWO GOVTS AGREE THAT PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO HAVE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND EMPHASIZED PRESIDENT CARTER'S RESTATEMENT OF INTENTION TO RESPECT THE WISHES OF THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 USUN N 03302 250052Z

PEOPLE CONCERNING THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. (HE GAVE CHEN COPY OF JULY 25 PROCLAMATION.) HE NOTED SUPPORT FOR PRESENT STATUS HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATED IN PAST PLEBISCITES AND THAT GOVERNOR ROMERO HAD INDICATED PLAN TO HOLD ANOTHER REFERENDUM AFTER 1980 ELECTIONS. HE POINTED OUT THAT DIFFERING PUERTO RICAN PARTIES USE C-24 AS FORUM TO ARGUE THEIR POLITICAL POSITIONS AND

CUBANS SEE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION AS AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE US.

3. AMB YOUNG EMPHASIZED OUR PREFERENCE FOR DEFERRAL OF SUBSTANTIVE ACTION IN LIGHT OF REFERENDUM COMING UP IN WHICH PEOPLE WILL AGAIN HAVE CHANCE TO EXPRESS THEIR WISHES. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PARTIES FAVORING INDEPENDENCE HAVE NEVER RECEIVED MORE THAN 6 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN PAST ELECTIONS BUT THAT THEY WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY FOR FULL PARTICIPATION WITH OTHER PARTIES IN REFERENDUM, AS THEY HAVE HAD IN PAST. US WAS NOT ASKING PRC TO COMPROMISE ITS PRINCIPLES IN SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, BUT AMB YOUNG THOUGHT PRESIDENT'S PROCLAMATION MADE CLEAR OUT POLICY WAS CONSISTENT WITH CHINA'S ON THIS POINT. HE THEREFORE HOPED PRC COULD AGREE TO DEFERRAL OF ACTION IN C-24.

4. AMB CHEN RESPONDED BY REFERRING TO AMB WOODCOCK'S CONVERSATION AT MFA AUG 1 (REF B) AND EXPRESSED VIEW THAT PRC AND US HAVE DIFFERENCE ON QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE. CHINA'S POSITION, HE SAID, IS THAT PUERTO RICO IS A COLONY OBTAINED BY US THROUGH WAR. OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COLONY DEMAND INDEPENDENCE AND CHINA SUPPORTS THEM IN THEIR STRUGGLE. HE ARGUED THAT COLONIAL PEOPLE HAVE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND EXERCISE OF THAT RIGHT MUST LEAD TO INDEPENDENCE, NOT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 USUN N 03302 250052Z

SOMETHING SHORT OF THIS WHICH CONTINUES TO PLACE COLONIAL PEOPLE IN SUBORDINATE POSITION. AFTER 80 YEARS PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO SHOULD HAVE INDEPENDENCE NOW, WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY. THIS WAS THE HISTORICAL TREND PEOPLE WANT INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERATION.

5. REFERRING TO THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, CHEN SAID CHINA ALSO HAD NOTED THAT CUBA WAS ENGAGED IN EXPANSIONIST ACTIVITIES IN CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICA AND WAS TRYING TO EXERT ITS INFLUENCE EVERYWHERE. CUBA WAS ACTING AS TOOL OF THE SOVIET UNION AND HE AGREED THAT CUBA USED THE CAWR TO EMBARRASS THE US. HE SAID IN SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLE OF PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO FOR INDEPENDENCE, CHINA OPPOSED ANY OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, INCLUDING FROM CUBA OR USSR. ON SURFACE ALL THREE COUNTRIES SUPPORTED INDEPENDENCE FOR PUERTO RICO, BUT CHINA DID SO FROM A DIFFERENT POINT OF DEPARTURE AND WITH DIFFERENT PURPOSES IN MIND THAN THOSE OF CUBA AND THE USSR. HE THOUGHT IF PUERTO RICO COULD ATTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF CUBA AND THE USSR IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO STABILITY IN THE CARIBBEAN.

6. AMB YOUNG SIAD HE RESPECTED PRINCIPLED POSITION OF PRC BUT POINTED OUT THAT US HAS NOT DETERMINED FOR THE

PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO WHAT STATUS THEY SHOULD CHOOSE OR WHEN THEY SHOULD MAKE SUCH CHOICE. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN ELECTED GOVT. HE RE-EMPHASIZED SMALL VOTE INDEPENDENCE PARTIES HAVE ACHIEVED IN PAST BUT SAID THAT IF PEOPLE SHOULD VOTE FOR INDEPENDENCE THE PRESIDENT HAS PLEDGED TO WORK WITH THEM TO ACHIEVE IT. THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO SHOULD MAKE THIS DECISION AND THAT IS WHY WE BELIEVE THE C-24 SHOULD DEFER ACTION.

7. CHEN RESTATED PREVIOUSLY ENUNCIATED POSITION AND SAID SOME PUERTO RICAN PARTIES HAVE CLOSE RELATIONS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 USUN N 03302 250052Z

WITH USG AND US FINANCIAL GROUPS, BUT THESE DID NOT REPRESENT THE MAJORITY. ACTION SHOULD NOT BE DEFERRED, AS CONTINUATION OF PRESENT SITUATION COULD LEAD TO ERUPTION AND TROUBLE IN THE AREA.

8. AT CLOSE OF CONVERSATION BOTH SIDES AGREED TO KEEP IN TOUCH ON THIS QUESTION. WE WILL FOLLOW UP WITH PRC DEL, IN PARTICULAR ON POSSIBILITY OF ABSENCE OR ABSTENTION. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO INDICATION OF ANY FLEXIBILITY IN CHINESE POSITION DURING THIS EXCHANGE. YOUNG

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